



Executive Officer's Statement
Victim Compensation and
Government Claims Board
October 20, 2005



2006-2007 Strategic Planning Effort Begins

This month Board staff begin their first strategic planning effort since 2001. A new strategic plan will assist the Board in defining its mission, establishing goals, and in planning the steps to achieve those goals. As part of this process the Board will also develop an operational plan with tasks, assignments, and milestones to be accomplished. Citygate Associates has been hired to assist the Board with developing the plan. The effort starts with a series of individual interviews and focus groups with staff members and stakeholders in October. The plan will be finalized in spring, 2006.

New CaRES Project Manager on Board

Errol Thomas joined the Board on September 15, 2005, as project manager for CaRES, the Board's new claims management system, replacing Dr. Mark Huston. Mr. Thomas comes to the project with 20 years of experience with the state in information technology project management and extensive experience as a consultant. Four consultant programmers joined CaRES in September and October to begin construction of the new system, set to debut in 2006.

Press Release Highlights Compensation to Victims Across California

In September, the Board issued a press release detailing the amount of compensation awarded to crime victims in each California county between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005. At least two newspapers, the Marin Independent Journal and the Santa Rosa Press Democrat, published articles highlighting compensation to victims in their counties.

Board Updates

San Bernardino County Restitution Efforts Highlighted in Visit

On October 6 Karen McGagin and Laura Hill, Deputy Executive Officer for Revenue Recovery and Accounting, met with San Bernardino County District Attorney Michael Ramos and his staff to discuss the successful approaches they have instituted for the imposition of restitution orders and fines.

San Diego Family Justice Center

Ted Boughton, Deputy Executive Officer for the Victim Compensation Program, visited the San Diego Family Justice Center on September 16. The San Diego Family Justice Center was the first site in the nation to gather service providers, law enforcement, medical providers and victim advocates in one location to better serve crime victims. Casey Gwinn, now Director of Restitution Enforcement and Victim Services in the San Diego County Attorney's Office, helped found the San Diego Family Justice Center when he was San Diego City Attorney.

California Victim Witness Coordinating Council Compensation Committee Meets

The Victim Witness Coordinating Council's Victim Compensation Committee met on October 4, 2005. The committee, composed of Joint Power County Unit directors and Victim Compensation Program staff, meets quarterly to discuss compensation issues and provide important feedback to the Victim Compensation Program.

National VOCA Conference: "What Works: Improving Results for Victims"

Karen McGagin, Board Executive Officer, and Tom O'Connor, Chief Deputy Executive Officer, will attend the National Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Training Conference in Albuquerque on November 3-6, 2005. This conference of compensation programs and state VOCA victim assistance administrators will focus primarily on the knowledge, research, evidence, and strategies that can be used to improve program performance to better serve victims of crime. Topics will include special presentations and discussions on applied research relevant to victim assistance and compensation programs.

Victim Compensation Advisory Committee Meeting

The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board hosted its quarterly Victim Compensation Advisory Committee meeting at the Board's Sacramento office on Wednesday, September 21. Patty O'Ran from the Office of Crime and Violence Prevention in the Department of Justice gave an update on the recently released report of the Attorney General's Task Force on Domestic Violence, *Keeping The Promise: Victim Safety and Batterer Accountability*. Jennifer Shaffer, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services in the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and Advisory Committee member, gave the group an informative overview of the recent changes and reorganization in her department. The 12-member advisory committee is composed of representatives from state agencies and other entities serving victims. Advisory Committee member Judge Kenneth Peterson has offered to host the next meeting at the new children's court in Sacramento.

Wellness and Development Programs Launched

The Board inaugurated a new wellness program for staff in September. September activities included the State Employees Heart Walk on September 14, and a brown-bag luncheon lecture by Bronwyn Schweigerdt, author of [The Undiet: Painless Baby Steps to Permanent Weight Loss](#). Future activities will include speakers on domestic violence in October and seminars on job interview skills and resume writing in upcoming months. Each week wellness and development tips will be posted in a new section on the Board's Intranet.

Application and Brochure Revamped

The Board's victim compensation application and brochures for the Victim Compensation and Restitution Programs have a new look. Our goal was to present easily understood information in English and Spanish regarding our programs. The new application will provide more space for applicants to provide information and will be available as a PDF form that can be filled out on-line and printed. We will also make the application available as a Microsoft Word file to advocates in Victim Witness Assistance Centers across the state, so that advocates can fill out, save and print applications on their computers as they are helping victims.